

Records Management Guidelines and Procedures For Unique Records Retention Schedules

State General Records Retention Schedule vs. Unique Retention Schedules

If an agency has a valid need to retain a State General Records Retention Schedule (State GS) records series longer than the retention period already approved by the State Records Committee (SRC), or if the cut-off in the State GS does not meet their agency's needs, a Disposition Authority Number (DAN) must be requested. The Records Management Office (RMO) recommends the agency include written justification clearly explaining requirements for a different retention period or cut-off.

NOTE: The RMO does not accept State GS records series on unique records retention schedules. This is an unacceptable practice that contradicts and conflicts with State GS records series approved by the SRC.

Retention Periods Greater Than 6 Years

It is preferred that all new or revised records series with retention periods greater than 6 years include written justification clearly explaining their agency requirement for a long-term retention period.

Archival Removal/Addition Requests

An agency may request that an Archival designation be added or removed by the RMO, or directly from the State Archives Olympia Branch. These requests must go before the Archival Appraisal (Review) Committee.

Transferring Records Series from One Office to Another

This is not considered a revision unless the function of the records series is also changed during the time of the transfer, i.e., the retention, cut-off, title, description, etc., are being revised.

Discontinued Records Series

If an agency wants to discontinue a records series it must include a revision statement that explains clearly why the records series is being discontinued, such as 'Discontinued to use GS 09005' or 'Discontinued to use 85-03-12345'.

In addition, if an agency is discontinuing the series because they are no longer receiving, collecting or creating the records; but will continue to retain and destroy existing records under that specific DAN, the agency must include the following language in the discontinued statement: 'Existing records will

continue to be retained and destroyed pursuant to this specific DAN until there are no more records in this series.'

If an agency determines that all records have been destroyed and has verified there are no more boxes being held at the Records Center, the information must be included in the revision statement.

Finally, the RM Office will no longer accept discontinued records series that do not have descriptions, classifications, retention periods, etc., listed on the schedule. All records series information shall be complete.

Unique Records Retention Schedules WILL BE RETURNED IF:

1. There are spellings, punctuation or grammatical errors.
2. Acronyms are not spelled out at least once on the page.
3. In-Office and Records Center retentions are not written in months.
4. The Total Retention is not written in years.
5. The Cut-Off is not spelled out.
6. The description and revision statement are not clearly separated.
7. The information on a revised records series does not match the most recently approved retention schedule on file at the RMO.

Deadline for State Records Committee Meeting Agenda

The deadline each month for an agency to submit unique records retention schedules to be reviewed and approved by the SRC is the 15th of each month. For example, if you would like your agency schedule(s) to go before the committee in September, they must be submitted to the RMO on or before August 15th.

Records Officers have the option of submitting DRAFT unique schedules to the RMO electronically to be reviewed by staff prior to sending the original paper copies. This preliminary review significantly reduces the chance that an agency's schedule will be returned due to missing information, spelling errors and other potential problems.

NOTE: The RMO reserves the right to change the deadline due to unanticipated circumstances, such as the cancellation of regularly scheduled meetings. The office also reserves the right to refuse unique schedules submitted for the upcoming agenda if there are numerous errors that must be rectified. This policy is based on the RMO's ability to complete the SRC packets in a timely manner.

Transferring Records from One State Agency to Another

Occasionally, state agencies are abolished or the administrations/divisions within state agencies are reorganized and become their own entity.

If and when this occurs, records series inevitably need to be transferred from the former agency to the new one.

To ensure efficiency and accuracy, this transfer must be accomplished in collaboration with the four parties clearly affected:

1. The former agency
2. The new agency
3. The RMO
4. The State Records Center

Particularly, all records must be transferred from the former agency to the new agency on unique records retention schedules. The RMO shall encourage at least one meeting prior to the official transfer to ensure all parties understand their roles and responsibilities.

Sharing DANs

An approved DAN will not be shared between agencies, but they can be shared between offices within an agency. However, this is an internal decision and does not need to be shared with the RMO. We strongly recommend that the agency determine which will be the 'main' or 'central' office for the DAN. This will be the RMO's location for that records series and all revisions to the DAN that will be approved.

The above guidelines and procedures have been approved by the Office of the Secretary of State, Washington State Archives and Records Management Division.

Approved by



Tri Howard, State Records Manager

Date:

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